

**THE EXISTENTIALISM IN SARAH WINMAN'S
NOVEL "*WHEN GOD WAS A RABBIT*"**



A Thesis

**Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Sarjana Humaniora in English and Literature Department
of the Faculty of Adab and Humanities
of UIN Alauddin Makassar**

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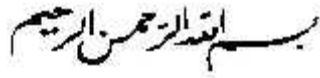
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ACKNOWLEDGMENT



First of all, the writer would like to express a lot of thanks to Allah swt for giving His blessing, mercy, guidance, and love during my study in faculty of Adab and Humanities of UIN Alauddin Makassar. The writer never forget to say greetings and *shalawat* to the great prophet Muhammad the great leader who has brought us from the darkness into the brightness era as we feel today.

During the process of writing this thesis, the writer has a lot of help from many people. Special gratitude is expressed to beloved parents who has passed away, Muris and Ramlah, which always in heart and given spirit for the writer.

The writer would like to express thank to the Rector of UIN Alauddin Makassar, Prof. Dr. Qadir Gassing, HT. MS., the Dean of Adab and Humanities Faculty, Prof. Dr. Mardan, M.Ag. The Head of English and Literature Department, Dr. Abd. Muin, M.Hum., and the Secretary of English and Literature Department, Serliah Nur, S.Pd., M.Hum., M.Ed., for their helps, supports, suggestions, precious time, and administrative supports.

The writer's deep gratitude due to the writer's consultants, Dr. H. Barsihannor, M. Ag., and Syahrani Junaid, S.S., M.Pd. for their generous supports, advices, constructives and suggestions, and precious times they have given during the completion of this thesis.

The great thanks is also expressed to all lecturers of Adab and Humanities Faculty, for their knowledge, enlightenment, and advice during the academic years, and also to the Staff of Adab and Humanities Faculty, for their help and administrative support.

Next, the writer also would like to say thanks to her uncle Muh. Syahrir Fatta, her aunt Muliani Rais and her grandmother Indar, who have patiently given their advices, moral values, financial supports, loves and prayers for the writer. The writer also would like to thank her lovely families, especially to her brother Riswandi Muris, her sister Rini Oktaviani and her cousins Ega Hernanda and Gea Adinda who have given their prayers and supports to the writer.

Next, the writer also would like to thanks to friends, at UIN Alauddin especially at Adab and Humanities Faculty, at BSI 2008, and all of her lovely friends especially for Hardianti HM. Nur, Sitti Aminah, S.Hum, Indah Lestari, S.Hum, Nita Sasmita, S.Hum, Haisyah, S.Hum, M. Imam Fitrah, S.Hum, Imran, S.Hum , Thamrin, S.Hum, Ilham Syarifuddin, Muhammad Yusuf, S.Hum, Hadira, S.Hum, Vivianti, S.Hum, Syamsuriana, S.Hum, Wiwi Pratiwi, S.Hum, Wisna Harusi, Salman Shauqi, Sudarmin, Faisal Tahir, S.Hum, Fadlullah, Muh. Kayyis, Rahmat Yusuf, Saefullah, Supriadi, Delukman A., S.Hum, Irma Ningsi Ridwan, S.Hum, Rustam, Nur aini, Akmal Baharuddin, S.Pd., S.T, Jaka Sukma and all of them who cannot be mentioned one by one. Thanks for all supports and prayers.

The writer realizes that this thesis is far from the perfect form, but she hopes that it will be usefull to the readers. Last but not the least, the writer presents this thesis for those who are interested in reading this thesis.

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis is a research about the Existentialism used in the novel "*When God was A Rabbit*" by Sarah Winman. The objective of this research is to know the aspects of existentialism revealed in Sarah Winman's novel "*When God was a Rabbit*".

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative method. The data resources of this research were the novel "*When god was a Rabbit*" by Sarah Winman which was published in 2011 and some books were used to analyze and support this research. In collecting the data, the writer used note taking as the instrument. The writer used Kierkegaard's theory to analyze the aspects of existentialism revealed in the novel.

In this research, the writer found that there are five aspects of existentialism found in the novel "*When God was A Rabbit* " by Sarah Winman. They are existence precedes essence, alienation or estrangement, fear and trembling anxiety, the encounter with nothingness and freedom.

The conclusion of this research that there are five aspects of existentialism revealed in the novel "*When God was A Rabbit*" by Sarah Winman. They were existence precedes essence, alienation or estrangement, fear and trembling anxiety, the encounter with nothingness and freedom.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

Human is created differently from other God's creatures. They are given intellectual ability in facing life. Unlike animal that has no fear and worry about limitedness and lack, human always tries to fight his lack and weakness. Human also never takes anything just for granted. They always want to make bad things in their life good, and make the good things better no matter if it would make them better or even worse. All of their life is a struggle to do the best in order to find and realize their life existence. Dagun (1990: 17) says that to be exist means doing action, becoming, and planning useful thing. Every human being becomes less than the previous conditions, they always try and try to seek every kind of possibilities. Absolutely, this effort will be done in order to find a better life condition, this basic character in every human then what we call as existence.

Existentialism is one of philosophy thoughts which looks that every kind of tendency is based on existence. Human existence is said to be authentic when he can choose and decide freely who and what he will become. Moreover, human being form themselves through out their own act and manner. To form themselves, they do not want to be influenced by others, even nature and social culture. Human also can show their reasons up on what he has done (Dagun, 1990: 18).

Literature and philosophy are, in fact, different from each other. The difference appears as philosophy studies human perform and emphasizes on the living human, while literature emphasizes its study on the characters living in work of art created by its author. However, these two studies have a close relationship as literature is often made as the manifestation of philosophy's ideas. And moreover, people always try to find a new solution for their problem. So there is the same characteristic in both literature and philosophy, that is the freedom in thinking. "Frequently literature is thought of as a form of philosophy, as ideas wrapped in form, and it is analyzed to yield leading ideas" (Wellek & Warren, 1956: 110).

Modern philosophy that influences modern literature is existentialism. One of the main issues in philosophy, as well as a literature, is human existence. It is a very interesting topic to know whether the novel of Sarah Winman can give many benefits to human's understanding about himself or not.

Sarah Winman (born 1964) is a British actress and author. In 2011 her debut novel *When God Was a Rabbit* became an international bestseller and won Winman several awards including New Writer of the Year in the Galaxy National Book Awards. The novel itself was published firstly on March 3rd, 2011 in London. Novel *When God was A Rabbit* picked up the story of the girl named Elly who grows up too fast. She does not like to play with little girls her age. This novel tell the story of portrayal of the childhood, secrets and difficulties adjusting to an adult world.

The researcher thinks that this novel represents literary work function as a guidance in real life. Because by reading this novel, we can take what has happened as a lesson to face the real life. For instance, as it can be found in Elly's character is strongly true that basically every human being will defend her existence where and when she is, although she must be responsible for more and more extraordinary risk that she faced. Whatever she can do to defend her existence, because every human being has a strong desire to be free to decide her way of life, without any intervention from others. So then, existentialism is able to be used to analyze novel "*When God was a Rabbit*". It is very challenging for researcher to analyze it deeply.

B. Problem Statement

Based on the background above, the writer formulated the following research question:

What are the aspects of existentialism revealed in Sarah Winman's novel "*When God was A Rabbit*"?

C. Objective of Research

Based on the research question above, the objective in this reseach is :

To know aspects of existentialism revealed in Sarah Winman's novel "*When God was A Rabbit*".

D. Significance of Research

This research has theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, the finding of this research served as a scientific reference for students and teachers of English and Literature Department.

Practically, the finding of this research is expected to give contribution in the field of literature. This research is also expected to give the further explanation and information about the existentialism.

E. Scope of Research

This writing focused on the analysis aspects of existentialism such as, existence precedes essence, alienation or estrangement, fear and trembling anxiety, the encounter with nothingness and freedom revealed in Sarah Winman “*When God was A Rabbit*” by reading and understanding the text through the novel.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A. Previous Findings

Lumbanbatu (2007) in her thesis entitles *The Existence of Female Character of The Other Side of Midnight by Sidney Sheldon*. She found that “The Other Side of Midnight” used in media res and episodic type of plot, flat characters, and supportive setting, both time and place, as well as the social setting. In her research used the theory of Sartre about a being human and Beauvoir about being woman.

Berlian (2007) in her thesis entitles *Eksistensialisme Isabel Acher dalam novel “Portrait of A Lady” karya Henry Jame; Mencari Esensi Sebuah Pilihan*. This research is focused on how the character of Isabel looks for her existentialism. The result of this research showed that the author tries to show that when Isabel Archer back to Osmond. She has been able to rebel for Victorian norm which push her down, get authenticity, maintain subjectivity, and find the freedom and the essence of her. In her research used Sartre’s theory about existentialism.

Wirahadi (2008) in his thesis entitles *The Existentialism Studies on Daniel Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe’s Freedom of Life*. The result of this study can be concluded that the way of Robinson Crusoe’s to defend his existence is related

much to the existentialism aspect. He also used Existentialism theory in order to find out the existentialism aspects of the novel, especially on its major character.

Those three researches above absolutely have the similarities and the differences with this research. The similarity of those three researches with this research is focused on the analysis of existentialism and used Sartre's theory.

The differences between those three previous researches, Wirahadi analyzed existentialism studies on Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe's freedom of life. Lumbanbatu in her thesis, analyzed the existence of female character of the other side of midnight by Sidney Sheldon. In Berlian's thesis, analyzed the essence of character of Potrait of Lady by Hendry James. Different from those three previous researches, this research is only focused to analyze the aspect of existentialism used in the novel *When God was A Rabbit* by Sarah Winman.

B. Novel

Fiction is a name of stories not entirely factual, but least partially shaped, made up, imagined. It is true that some fictions, such as historical novel, a writer draws upon factual information in presenting scenes, event in characters. In fiction, "the fact" may or maybe not true that and the story is none the worse for their being entirely imaginary. What expected from fiction is a sense of how people act, not an authentic chronicle of how, at past time, a few people acted.

Modern literary fiction in English has been dominated by two forms, the novel and short story. Both of them are kind of prose. The word novel comes from

Latin *Novellas*, in Italian *Novella*, in German *Novelle*. In literary meanings, *Novella* means a new little thing and then interpreted as short story in prose.

According to Smiley (2005:4) :

A novel is a (1) *lengthy*, (2) *written*, (3) *prose*, (4) *narrative* with a (5) *protagonist*. Everything that the novel is and does, every effect that the novel has had on, first Western culture, and subsequently, world culture, grows out of these five small facts that apply to every novel.

Then Kennedy states “ a novel is a book length story in prose, whose author tries to create the sense that while we read. We experience life” (Kennedy, 1995 : 312).

Unlike Kennedy, Abrams give definition about novel. Novel is a fiction introduce an imagination word (Abrams, 1981: 61).

From explanations above about novel, it can be concluded that novel comes later in literature; it becomes one way of conveying feeling and thought or a medium that can be used to criticize everything that happens in this world where someone lives. Besides that, it also has certain elements that build it to be interesting and enjoyable thing to be read.

C. Existentialism

1. The History of Existentialism

Existentialism belongs to contemporary philosophy. It was established and produced by the nineteenth century philosopher's thought. It was introduced first in Denmark and was pioneered by Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855). Soren Kierkegaard was a Denmark philosopher and theologian. However, some earlier

writers, such as Pascal (1623-1662), who criticized theistic proofs and contrasted the God of philosopher's with the living God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob, have been seen in retrospect as forerunners of Existentialism. The concept of Existentialism is also found in other great philosopher's works, such as Nietzsche (1844-1900), Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), Karl Jaspers (1883-1969), and Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1980).

Existentialism stands as a branch of philosophy that studies the path of man's efforts to exist in the world. As it is said before, one thing that makes human being different from other God's creature is that he spends the whole life trying to make him be better, it will not matter if only makes him worse.

As it is said before, so many existentialists wrote their ideas about the definition of existentialism through their works. However, since they always had different concept about it, so we may find difficulty in determining in the exact definition of it. Thus, in order to understand the definition of existentialism, but the depth understanding on it. Marcel states that existentialism is too long to explain, all one can do is try to elucidate a key notion of it, not to formulate a definition (in Mc. Elroy, 1972:11). Even though the existentialists have difference opinions in defining existentialism itself, but there is a point as an area of agreement on it that it is based on concrete human being.

2. The Concept of Existentialism

Existentialism is a philosophy, which spread up widely in the twentieth century. Kierkegaard (in Panjaitan, 1996:27) states that Existentialism is related

much with human's freedom. In his terminology, to exist means to realize his self through the freedom of choice and self-commitment. In addition, then he stresses that every human is individuality that is difference with others. So then, existentialism term is special for human being not for other God's creatures, due to the only human being that has existence. Then, Kierkegaard clarified his judgment, as bellow;

“An existing individual is himself in process of becoming. In existence the watchword is always forward. “Existence is the child that is born of the infinite and the finite, the eternal and the temporal, and his therefore a constant striving” (Copleston, 1963:348).

Based on the above explanations, it is clear that Kierkegaard defined existentialism as a concrete and unique human individual manner. That is why, Kierkegaard strongly disagree with Hegel's opinions that supposed human as passive creature, passive observer, and just have a role as a movie.

On the other hand, Jean Paul Sartre (in Muzairi, 2002:4-5) defines existentialism as one the anthropology philosophy that expresses on human existence's freedom and responsible. It is strongly difference to another philosophy studies, which Existentialism focus its studies on human existence. So that, Existentialism discourse forces everyone to aware the reality, that this world and human existence does not finish and imperfect. It means, human being always to face the existential problems like anxiety, fear and trembling anxiety, freedom, death, etc. All of them are the empirical facts for human being itself.

The existentialists believe that an individual has a difference from other God's creature, as it is only human being that exists. The other comments is coming from Suyitno, he says that Existentialism is a genre of philosophy thought that appears as a response to the modern life. In his mind, the modern life brings us about nothingness, despair, and feeling of loathing. The only solution to solve this problem is freedom that based on the individual (1986:108).

Meanwhile, existentialism can also be translated as man's effort, a man tries to build the identity of his own and determine his place in his society. Existentialism is the effort of the man to relate himself to his own life of others around him (Stafford, 1966:349). Existentialism is not understood as an organized plan or abstract thought, but men's concrete efforts to seek for his meaningful life to the others. Thus, existentialism is not regarded as a system of thought but as a concrete effort to make one's life useful and respectable by the society. On the other hand, loneliness, despair, and anxiety mark existentialism. It emphasized most on human's freedom and some aspect related to it, such as desperation, loneliness, sickness, etc. that human must pass through his life. With existentialism, human tries to break all of these conditions and begin to think beyond.

As we know that from the outside, a man is just another natural creature, but from inside he is different from other natural creature. The difference itself lies in his ability to think and choose as what he wants. A man is able to decide what he wants to be and what he wants to do then. However, the consequence must be

taken. In this activity of choosing and deciding, a man finds his freedom. This is emphasis of Existentialism. “A feature of human existence, for existentialists, is that men are active and creative while things are not. Things are simply what they are, but men might be other than they are. Men must choose, and (at least on some versions) not like things, already determined. Existence precedes essence for men. Men make their essence as they go along and do not live out a predetermined essence...” (Lacey, 1978: 64).

Existentialism is also considered as the answer to many questions existing in the modern life. However, since the existentialists believed that not all existence is finished, they also believed that human’s problem could not be solved by a solid answer. The answer that is required to solve the problem will bring about another question, because the answer will always be in form of two or more choices. That is why the answer is considered as a continuous choice to make. It will remain as decision to be made and remade by all.

3. Five Aspects of Existentialism

Gordon E. Bigelow in his book *A Primer of Existentialism* formulates that there are five aspects of existentialism such as existence precedes essence, alienation or estrangement, fear and trembling anxiety, the encounter with nothingness and freedom.

a. Existence Precedes Essence

Everything that exists in the world has essence. We can say something like chair, stone, flower, and etc. As they have an essence, it can be defined as

the quality, which is possessed by everything that exists in this world. However, it is only human being who has existence. Difference from essence, existence gives more emphasis on its perfection of its condition of being live. Therefore, it can be said that existence is more important than essence and must come first before the essence.

Flynn (2006: 8) in his book states that what you are (your essence) is the result of your choice (your existence) rather than the reverse. Essence is not destiny. You are what you make yourself to be.

Sartre's famous definition of existence states that existence means that the person begins as nothing and only afterwards does become something and form his or her essence through his or her chosen policies of action (Eliade, 1987:222).

Kierkegaard states that the most important that for human being is his existence. Yet, his existence is not the final. It is always in the process of becoming something, as human being always moves from possibility into reality. This process is possible because he has his own freedom. Therefore, human existence exists in human freedom, and this freedom exists in human action. He also says that having an existence means having courage to determine and decide his own life (Dagun, 1990:50).

A man is said to live if he exists in the midst of crisis. Hence, the crisis can be found in his particular experience. Therefore, man's self-existence is recognizing from his particular experience that differentiates him from others.

Existentialism gets its name from an individual man's existence, his particular experience of life (Allsid, 1964:204).

The existence of a man can be seen from two sides. From the outside, a man appears to be just another natural creature and from inside, he is an entire universe, the center of mystery, therefore, Existentialism emphasizes on the subjective or personal, rather than objective or impersonal. Man is said to be equal, but existentially operate his own world, which differentiates him from other individual.

Human existence is understandable only in terms of individual's existence his particular experience of life. Thus, to understand the existence of man, we can not merely appreciate him from his physical appearance or his outside (a man is). It should be appreciated from his behavior, his attitude toward society, and most of all, his experience of life or his inside.

From explanation above it clear that existence precedes essence because existence begins as nothing and only after wards does become something and forms his or her essence through his or her chosen policies of action. It says that a man lives (has existence), rather than man is (has being or essence), and the every man's experience of life is unique, radically different from everyone else, and can be understood only in terms of his involvement in life or commitment to it. In short, it is a man who decides and determines his existence himself through his experience that he has in life.

b. Alienation or Estrangement

As the result of the opinion, there was a separation between physical or non-rational and rational parts of human. People start to worship and give priority on the rational part. Human being is said to be perfect when he gets and uses his rational part well. Rationalist even says "*Cogito Ergo Sum*," I think, therefore I exists. It all makes people try to use their rational part well and develop it in order to get some progress in life. The impact is that there is development in people's life, a good and modern technology, and some progress in industry.

This condition however, also gives threat to human life. People tend to join themselves with a certain group just to have acknowledgement and be estimated by others. Dealing with this, Kierkegaard states that: "A crowd in its very concept is the untruth by reason of the fact that it renders the individual completely impenitent and irresponsible or at least weakness his sense of responsibility by reducing to it a fraction (Hasan, 1973:27).

An individual usually lose his own existence and feel alienation or estrangement. Existentialist said that in facing the problem of life, human sometimes tries to alienate from fourfold conditions; "they are convinced that modern man lives in fourfold condition of alienation: from God, from nature, from other man and from his own true self" (Alssid, 1964:206).

The alienation from God may happen when human being feels that life is very hard and unbearable, that fate has given by God is ago unfair. He feels that

God who should be a helper for him only gives unbearable burden. Human being will alienate himself from God when he finds that there is no comfort in believing in God as he had been considered to be unfair or he feels that he had already been so far from him because of his all wrong doing. This alienation from God is the most shocking effect from himself because if a man has declared it, he will have no faith in him.

The second alienation or estrangement is from nature. In order to survive, human being always has to relate himself to the nature. The direct, natural, necessary relation of human creatures is the relation of man to woman (Beauvoir, 1974:814). However, how great the progress is in his effort to conquer the nature, he is always to bind it and cannot avoid himself from obligation caused by it. For example in conquering the nature, he creates the civilization as the form of his effort to free himself from the nature's demand. Yet, the fact is the finally has to be bound to his creation of civilization. Berdyaev is one of existentialist who puts emphasis on individual freedom, states that; "civilization promises to emancipate man and there can be no dispute that it provides the equipment for emancipation, but it is also the objectification of human existence and therefore it brings enslavement with it. Man is made the slave of civilization" (Hasan, 1973:63). This civilization's slavery of the men then is proved to give threat to human existence, and this causes human being to alienate himself from nature.

The alienation or estrangement from other man comes as the third type of alienation that happens to modern man. Human being is always called a social creature, as he always needs other men, and even cannot live without them. In living with other men, he gets opportunity to realize his self-existence. However, there are always social regulation, values, and norms that always have to be obeyed in living with other man. All of them then, are proved to give more to threat to his existence than benefit. When human being feels that all the regulations and social norms overwhelmed and overpowered him, he will tend to alienate himself from other man.

A third estrangement occurred at the social level and its sign is growing dismay at man's helplessness. Bigelow gives an example in this alienation and says that the most disturbing of all is the young man's loneliness, the impermeable membrane of estrangement, which surrounds him and prevents anyone else penetrating to his experience of life or sympathizing with it (Alssid, 1973:207).

The fourth kind of alienation, man's estrangement from his own true self, especially as his nature, always concerns with the sanctity of the individual human's soul. It is as well as his pre-occupation with sin and the dark side of human nature, which must be seen in part of his attempt to build back some fullness to the flattened image of man bequeathed to him by the enlightenment.

From explanation above it clear that alienation or estrangement they are convinced that modern man lives in fourfold condition of alienation: from God,

from nature, from other man and from his own true self .When human being had already felt estrangement and alienation from God, nature, and other men, he would not be able to give faith in everything: to God, to the other men, and even to himself. Most of all, this is the last estrangement or alienation that happens to modern man. In the broadest sense, a man in this condition is driven to become hollow, powerless, and faceless. And at the time, when his command over natural forces seems to be limited, man is pictured as weak, ridden with nameless dread, and this bring us to the other major characteristic of existentialism.

c. Fear and Trembling Anxiety

As it is said before, existentialism appears as the impact of the World War I. It comes as the criticism toward chaotic life caused by the war and the social structure, which existed at that time. It is also caused by the failure of the enlightenment views that boasted the supremacy of human reason, mixed with the great depression and the World War II. Systems, which existed, were considered dysfunctional anymore. The condition at the time was completely chaotic. People got no more faith in everything and there began the great fear and trembling.

Sartre says that the first principle of existentialism is that man is nothing else but what he makes of and decides for himself (Hasan, 1973:93). Consequently, it is he who is responsible for himself. Whatever his existence will be and whatever his existence gives meaning to his life, it is only he who

will take the consequence and responsibility. However, in choosing and deciding, he will always have to base his decision on the consideration that it will be the image of all men. When he chooses to do something or be someone, he should consider that his decision would be useful for others.

Some existentialist like Kierkegaard, have laid great stress on the anxiety as a basic emotion or state of mind, which illuminates the human condition. In the case of Kierkegaard and other Christian existentialists, the experience of anxiety may predispose toward the life of faith by awakening the need for salvation. Yet, among atheistic existentialists, anxiety points rather to despair, for the inner contradiction in the human being is considered incapable of resolution, so that human existence is always on the edge of absurdity. In this fourth characteristic, Bigelow says that man is always oppressed by anxiety (Alssid, 1964:208).

From explanation above it clear that existentialism appear as the impact of the world war and the condition at the time was completely chaotic. People got no more faith in everything and there began the great fear and trembling. And then the anxiety is caused by man's demand to make moral choice. In making choice, he should be responsible for the moral consequence he had made. It does not only influence him, but also the society. The responsibility of moral choice often brings about such moral anxiety within man's life.

d. The Encounter with Nothingness

Sartre says for all his literature in a short term “reconciliation subject and object.” This effort is supported by fundamentally experience about nothingness (self as subject) and thing (object), (Abidin, 2000:172). Both of them in Sartre are symbol of condition human being as free man, but on the other side it is faced to power.

The existence of human cannot be separated from the aspects of life as a whole. Therefore, that human cannot alienate himself from other aspects of life such as from the existence of God, other man, nature, and himself. When human tries to alienate himself from the society, he will accept nothing from it. His life will be empty, and at last, he cannot take any advantages from it.

It is because of the complete alienation or estrangement that human starts to fill great emptiness and nothingness. The modern man feels no more superiority in having the vast advantage and progress in his technology. Instead, he feels that he walks into the deep ravine of nothingness. He cannot find his self-existence anymore in this world and he feels that what he had done is useless and meaningless. In this nothingness, he has no feelings, no fear, and feels no anxiety anymore; moreover there is no resolution at all.

The sense of nothingness is the feeling of despair and pessimism (Alssid, 1964:210). When a man is confronted with the overwhelming fact that the way to solve his problem cannot be found anymore on earth, he would decide to meet his death. Nothingness will bring him to thought that he has been living

for nothing, that he has no reason to live. It is impossible for him to go back or to stop. It is also impossible for him to close his eyes, pretending that there was nothing before him and all he got is suffering and actual death. To avoid himself from this difficult situation, he has to get the freedom. This characteristic is bringing us to the last major of Existentialism.

From explanation above it clear that for the man that alienated from God, from nature, from society, and event from himself, then what left at lasts is nothingness.

e. Freedom

Freedom is essential for human being. Human existence is said to be authentic when the individual freely chooses who and what he will become in his own live. Existentialism is related much with human's freedom. Freedom is essential for human being. As we commonly known Kierkegaard is the founding father of existentialism, so that he is the father of existentialists. Kierkegaard says, in principle human being is individual, and individual itself identically with freedom. In this case, "individual" is the keyword for human to say "yes" or "no" to do something. Every human every individual will create "his world" based on his free choice absolutely. It is irrespective of authoritarian family procedure, the repressive political system or from the socially awkward culture system, but human existence itself is based on one core, that is self-existence. This is the true existentialism of human which cannot refuse to accept the decision handed down by an authority.

Flynn (2006: 8) in his book states that existentialism is a philosophy of freedom. Its basis is the fact that we can stand back from our lives and reflect on what we have been doing. In this sense, we are always 'more' than ourselves. But are as responsible as we are free.

According to Bigelow, atheistic and religious existentialists have a different interpretation about freedom (Alssid, 1964:211). Freedom for the atheist is interpreted as human autonomy. The existence of God is a threat to human's freedom, for God makes human as His puppets, His actors that have to play their given roles. In order to get freedom, man should get his own right to choose and decide, outside the existence of God who determines man's life and fate. However, that freedom always drags the heavy responsibility and consequence along the way, since it must be the best choose, not only for him but also for others and every mankind. So, the aim is to bring a better life or better condition for him and everyone.

Meanwhile, the religious existentialists include God as a radical factor in interpreting freedom. According to the religious existentialists, human is not considered as "the man of will", but he is "the man of faith" (Alssid, 1964:211). God had already human their fate. Human being is one of the God's creatures that are called "God-like". He has some characters that are said as the representation of God characters. However, he also has what people believe to be the dark side, the human side that often drives him far from his own God

Like character. The freedom for religious existentialist is more emphasized on the effort to get the salvation from God and to get back his God Like side.

Having compared the two opinions, find that there is one thing in common. The freedom which human chooses will always bring the responsibility and consequence that must be taken along. It is, for atheistic existentialists aimed to be a struggle to human's better condition and life. Whereas for the religious existentialists involves an acceptance of responsibility for choice and a commitment to one's choice. Yet, that is the meaning of faith that can be compared to Abraham's the commitment which is agonizing sacrifice of one's own desire and will and dearest treasure to God's (Alssid, 1964:211).

From explanation above it clear that freedom is essential for human being. Human existence is said to be authentic when the individual freely chooses who and what he will become in his own live. On the other hand freedom is the supreme value among the existentialist.

D. Synopsis of the Novel *When God was A Rabbit*

Elly is the kind of girl who grows up too fast. She doesn't like to play with little girls of her age; she prefers the company of Mr. Golan, her elderly neighbor. But her friendship with Mr. Golan takes a dark turn, and only Elly's brother, Joe, knows her secret. Joe gives Elly a pet rabbit, which she names God, to alleviate the loneliness of her childhood. Elly soon finds another best friend: Jenny Penny, a new girl in town who has a chaotic home life. But Elly and Jenny

are soon separated. Elly's parents decide to open a bed-and-breakfast in Cornwall, and Jenny disappears without a trace. Friendless in her new town, Elly leans on her family for support, especially Joe, who is struggling to come to terms with his sexuality.

Even as an adult, shadows from childhood haunt Elly's life. She learns that Jenny Penny murdered an abusive husband, and they renew their friendship through letters Jenny writes from jail. Elly finds her calling as a newspaper columnist, writing about the relationships she has lost and found. Joe tries to start a new life in New York, but he disappears in the chaos of 9/11. Elly manages to track Joe down, but he has lost his memory and feels stifled by his sister's devotion. As Joe's memory gradually returns, he reveals Elly's childhood secret: Mr. Golan molested her. Elly's loved ones can finally help her heal, and she learns to rely on the family and friends who have stood by her during her years of silence. (Winman, 2011).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

A. Research Method

The method used in this research was descriptive qualitative method. This method intended to analyze the aspects of existentialism revealed in Sarah Winman's novel "*When God was A Rabbit*".

B. Source of Data

Data source is the original data, it is "*When God was A Rabbit*" Novel that is divided into two parts and consists of 352 pages which is published on May 12, 2011 (Winman, 2011).

C. Instrument of the Research

In collecting data, the writer used note taking as an instrument of research. It was used to get the data from the novel, after reading the novel "*When God was A Rabbit*" by Sarah Winman and the other relevant references, the writer made some notes to classify and find the aspects of existentialism.

D. Procedures of Data Collection

In collecting data, the writer applied several procedures as follows:

1. Reading the novel carefully.
2. Identifying the aspects of existentialism in the novel "*When God Was A Rabbit*" by Sarah Winman.
3. Making cards and then writing down the symbol of card, there are five cards: red, yellow, green, blue and white. The red card was used to note

down the information about existence precedes essence, the yellow card was used to note the information about alienation or estrangement, the green card was used to note the information about fear and trembling anxiety, the blue one was used to note down the information about the encounter with nothingness , and the last one was used to note down the information about freedom.

4. Classifying the data with the theory of Soren Kierkegaard about aspects of existentialism in the cards.

E. Tehnique of Data Analysis

In this research, the writer analyzed every word, phrase and sentence carefully through the novel “*When God was A Rabbit*” by Sarah Winman and determinethe aspects of Existentialism such us existence precedes essence, alienation or estrangement, fear and trembling anxiety, the encounter with nothingness and freedom revealed in the novel by using Kierkegaard’s theory.

CHAPTER IV

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

A. Finding

Based on the data analysis of aspects of existentialism by using Kierkegaard's theory, there were five aspects of existentialism, such as existence precedes essence, alienation or estrangement, fear and trembling anxiety, the encounter with nothingness and freedom that revealed in the novel "*When God was A Rabbit*" by Sarah Winman.

1. Existence Precedes Essence

According to Kierkegaard, it is true that the most important that for human being is his existence. Yet, his existence is not the final. It is always in the process of becoming something, as human being always moves from possibility into reality (Dagun, 1990:50)

Datum 1

This was not helping. God loved everything, it seemed, except me I peeled off the last curve of chocolate, exposing the white marshmallow mound and the heart of jam.

'Are you all right?' asked my mother.

'I'm not going back to Sunday school,' I said.

'Hallelujah!' said my father. 'I'm glad about that.'

'But I thought you liked it?' said my mother.

'Not any more,' I said. 'I only really liked the singing bit.'(Winman, 2011: 10)

Datum 2

'Laughing? Crying? It's all the same really, isn't it?' said Jenny Penny.

I didn't think it was but I didn't say anything. **Even then I knew her world was different from mine.** (Winman, 2011: 28)

Datum 3

'Nothing stays forgotten for long, Elly. **Sometimes we simply have to remind the world that we're special and that we're still here.**' (Winman, 2011: 66)

2. Alienation or Estrangement

Sometime, an individual lose his own existence and feel alienation or estrangement. It is due to varies kind of problems that he faces in his life. Existentialist said that in facing theproblem of life, human sometimes tries to alienate from fourfold conditions; "they are convinced that modern man lives in fourfold condition of alienation: from God, from nature, from other man and from his own true self" (Alssid, ed. 1964:206).

Datum 4

'Does God love everyone?' I asked my mother as I reached across a bowl of celery to take the last teacake. My father looked up from his papers. He always looked up when someone mentioned God. It was a reflex, as if he were about to be hit. (Winman, 2011: 10)

Datum 5

But even I saw my father laugh, and my brother, and Jenny Penny swore that she saw my motherlaugh as she looked up from her hot chocolate. She loved moments like that. The inclusiveness offamily. **I guess because she had none.** (Winman, 2011: 32)

Datum 6

'I'm not sure,' I said, quite aware of my own muted need to fit in, somehow simply to hide.

'Idon't want people to know I'm different.'

And I looked up and saw my brother standing in the doorway. (Winman, 2011: 44)

Datum 7

‘No one really knows where it is,’ she said, ‘but I’ll find it and then I’ll go and then they’ll worry,’ and **she looked at me and her dark eyes melted into the deep, shadowed sockets.**
(Winman, 2011: 46)

3. Fear and Trembling Anxiety

Existentialist like Kierkegaard has laid great stress on the anxiety as a basic emotion or state of mind, which illuminates the human condition. In the case of Kierkegaard and other Christian existentialists, the experience of anxiety may predispose toward the life of faith by awakening the need for salvation. Yet, among atheistic existentialists, anxiety points rather to despair, for the inner contradiction in the human being is considered incapable of resolution, so that human existence is always on the edge of absurdity. In this fourth characteristic, Bigelow says that man is always oppressed by anxiety (Alssid, 1964:208).

Datum 8

She was about to say something when she suddenly stopped and stared at me. **And I believe now that what she saw in my eyes, what I saw in hers – the fear – was the realisation that she knew what had happened to me.** (Winman, 2011: 22)

Datum 9

I sat on the bed, noting her qualities in a way most people would have reserved for an epitaph. **My fear was as silent as her multiplying cells.** (Winman, 2011: 23)

Datum 10

Had my parents ceased for one glorious moment, to stop and be still in the silence, they would have heard the sound of my brother’s heart break in two. (Winman, 2011: 56)

Datum 11

‘I don’t think we’ll ever see each other again,’ she said, looking up at me, her face red and blotchy from her tears. (Winman, 2011: 61)

4. The Encounter with Nothingness

The sense of nothingness is the feeling of despair and pessimism (Alssid, 1964:210). When a man is confronted with the overwhelming fact that the way to solve his problem cannot be found anymore on earth, he would decide to meet his death. Nothingness will bring him to think that he has been living for nothing, that he has no reason to live. It is impossible for him to go back or to stop. It is also impossible for him to close his eyes, pretending that there was nothing before him and all he got is suffering and actual death.

Datum 12

Why were we there? Why was Mrs. Penny there? Something unnatural held their world together and it was a feeling that, at that age, I couldn’t yet put a word to. My brother said it was probably the braided twine of heartbreak. **Of disappointment. Of regret. I was too young to disagree. Or to fully understand.** (Winman, 2011:36)

Datum 13

But as the weeks proceeded, instead of accepting that both brushes with death were in fact miracles of survival, my father convinced himself that the vengeful shadow of Justice was looming ever closer. He believed it was simply a matter of time before its jaws would shut and he would find himself a prisoner behind those gated slabs of bloody teeth, realising that all had passed. **That life had, in fact, gone.** (Winman, 2011: 37)

Datum 14

‘What is it?’ I asked her again.
She looked more pensive than usual.

‘What’ll happen to me if your mum and dad split up for good? **Who will I go with?**’ she asked. (Winman, 2011: 45)

Datum 15

I ran. Not because I was scared, not at all – I’d seen that interaction in the magazine; a woman was doing it that time and maybe someone was watching, though I couldn’t be sure – but I ran because I’d trespassed on their clandestine world, and I ran because **I realised it was a world that no longer held a place for me.** (Winman, 2011: 47)

Datum 16

Two weeks later Jean Hargreaves committed suicide, and in the time it took for her to fall twenty floors, **my father lost faith in everything; but most of all in himself.** (Winman, 2011: 53)

Datum 17

It’s the end of a chapter, Elly,’ was all she could say after that, and she was right. His life meant more to me than anything, and now his death did, for it left an anguished hole impossible to fill. Jenny Penny was always right. (Winman, 2011: 70)

5. Freedom

Kierkegaard states that human existence is not static (Dagun, 1990:50). It means that human always moves from a possibility to reality. As human possesses freedom, this movement to the development possibly takes place and is based on himself. Human existence itself is found and exists in his freedom. Thus, freedom can be identified as human existence itself (Hasan, 1973:24). Human existence is said to be authentic when the individual freely chooses who and what he will become.

Datum 18

I was quite happy in this new life, just Jenny Penny and me, and we would go and sit in the bottom shed, **a welcome quiet away from the chaos and unhappiness that being rich had somehow instilled.** (Winman, 2011: 45)

Datum 19

I knew none of that as I looked back and watched her and our street recede like the point of light in a tunnel, until the moment we turned the corner and she and it were gone. **I felt the air sucked out of my lungs like life itself.**
(Winman, 2011: 61)

B. Discussion

In this part, the writer identified the data which were taken from the novel *“When God was A Rabbit”* by Sarah Winman. The writer identified the aspects of existentialism based on Kierkegaard’s theory who has divided aspects of existentialism into five aspects. They are existence precedes essence, alienation or estrangement, fear and trembling anxiety, the encounter with nothingness and freedom.

1. Existence Precedes Essence

In **datum 1** expressed that Elly doesn’t like going to school because she felt that school is not important. She just likes to singing. She is brave to strive her parents. She is not going back to school. The bold sentence above is categorized existence precedes essence because someone always in the process of becoming something, as a human being someone always moves from possibility into reality. This process is possible because Elly has her own freedom of choosing.

In **datum 2**, Elly expressed that she is different from her friend. She felt that her mind differs from her friend's because her friend thinks that laughing and crying are the same thing but for Elly, they are not. Elly always feels true by what she thinks. The writer categorized the bold sentence in existence precedes essence because Elly feels that her existence is more important than essence and it must come first before the essence. As we know that everything that exists in the world has essence. Different from essence, existence gives more emphasis on its perfection of its condition of being life.

The bold sentence in **datum 3**, absolutely, is the aspect of existentialism, existence precedes essence because in here Elly expressed her feeling that she wants the whole world knows that she exists. Existence is not the final. It is always in the process of becoming something.

2. Alienation or Estrangement

Here, Elly asked to her mother about God's love. Her father shocked to her that because her father is atheist. Her father always shocked if someone asked around God. Elly feels that God does not love her. The bold sentence in **datum 4** is categorized into alienation or estrangement because Elly loses her own existence and feels alienated from God. Human being will alienate himself from God when she finds that there is no comfort in believing in God.

In **datum 5** expressed that Elly is joking with her family and Jenny also be there. Jenny comes from a broken family. It is different from

Elly's family. Jenny feels that her family do not care with her. The writer categorized the bold sentence into alienation or estrangement from other. Human being is always called a social creature, as he always needs other men, and even cannot live without them. In living with other men, human being gets an opportunity to realize his self-existence.

The **datum 6** express that Elly does not agree with her father's statement about the colour of the new car. She feels alienate from her father because her opinion is not accepted. The bold sentence includes one of aspects of existentialism especially alienation from other. Human being is always called a social creature, as he always needs other men, and even cannot live without them. In living with other men, he gets opportunity to realize his self-existence.

Jenny Penny feels sad. She wants to go underground to Atlantic because her mother does not care with her. She wants her mother worried. The writer categorized the bold sentence **indatum 7** into alienation or estrangement because Jenny feels alienate from the other. Human being is always called a social creature, as he always needs other men, and even cannot live without them. In living with other men, he gets opportunity to realize his self-existence.

3. Fear and Trembling Anxiety

Datum 8 expressed that Elly feels anxiety with her friend. She look tears in her friend's eyes. They are getting problem. Kierkegaard has laid great stress on the anxiety as a basic emotion or state of mind, which

illuminates the human condition. The bold sentence is categorized fear and trembling anxiety because someone looks oppressed by anxiety.

In **datum 9**, Elly sits on the bed and thinks about her mother. She is afraid if something happens with her mother. The bold sentence is categorized into fear and trembling anxiety because Elly got no more faith in everything. The experience of anxiety may predispose toward the life of faith by awakening the need for salvation.

In **datum 10** expressed that Elly cares with her brother. But her parents do not realize it. She is disquieting her brother. The bold sentence is categorized fear and trembling anxiety because according to Kierkegaard, it has laid great stress on the anxiety as a basic emotion or state of mind, which illuminates the human condition.

In **datum 11** expressed that Jenny Penny feels sad because she cannot meet with her friend again. They will be separated each other. Her friend will move to another place. The writer categorized the bold sentence into fear and trembling anxiety because principle of existentialism is that man is nothing else but what he makes of and decides for him self.

4. The encounter with Nothingness

In **datum 12** expressed that Elly feels dissappointed and regret. She felt nothing. She is pessimism with herself. The bold sentence is categorized into the encounter with nothingness because Elly felt despair

and pessimism the sense of nothingness. It is clear that when human tries to alienate himself from the society, he will accept nothing from it.

In **datum 13**, Elly's father feels gone of the deep end. He feels life is going for nothing. The bold sentence is categorized into the encounter with nothingness because Elly's father felt that he has been life for nothing and life is end. When human tries to alienate himself from the society, he will accept nothing from it.

Datum 14 expressed that Elly's parents will divorce. Jenny Penny in difficult situation. She does not know who should be chosen. She feels nothing. The bold sentence is categorized into the encounter with nothingness because the existence of human cannot be separated from the aspects of life as a whole. Therefore, that human cannot alienate himself from other aspects of life such as from the existence of God, other man, nature, and himself. When human tries to alienate himself from the society, he will accept nothing from it. His life will be empty, and at last, he cannot take any advantages from it.

Datum 15 expressed that Elly got her brother with a boy in the pantry. She runs. Not because she is scare but she shocked, her brother is homosexual. She feel place in whole world to go. Nothingness will bring human to think that he has been living for nothing, that he has no reason to live. The bold sentence categorized in the encounter with nothingness.

Elly's father feels lose his faith. He feels guilty of Jean Hargreaves die. He loses self confidence and feels nothing. The bold sentence in

datum 16 is categorized as the form of encounter with nothingness because her father felt nothing. Nothingness will bring human to thought that he has been living for nothing.

Elly has a pet named God. She loves it very much. For Elly her pet is everything. When Elly's pet died, she is very sad and feel nothing. The bold sentence in **datum 17**, absolutely, is the aspects of existentialism especially the encounter with nothingness because nothingness will bring human to think that he has been living for nothing.

5. Freedom

Elly felt happy and has found new life. She felt the world is her mine. Human existence itself is found and exists in his freedom. It seems revealed in **datum 18** because. Freedom is essential for human being. Human existence is said to be authentic when the individual freely chooses who and what he will become in his own live. On the other hand freedom is the supreme value among the existentialist.

Elly felt something different, something like free. The bold sentence in **datum 19** included in freedom. It is clear that she felt freedom in her life. Its basis is the fact that we can stand back from our lives and reflect on what we have been doing. In this sense, we are always 'more' than ourselves. But are as responsible as we are free.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

After analyzing the data, it is important to conclude what have been elaborated before. So then the writer got conclusion that there are five aspects of existentialism revealed in the novel "*When God was A Rabbit*" by Sarah Winman. They were existence precedes essence, alienation or estrangement, fear and trembling anxiety, the encounter with nothingness and freedom.

B. Suggestion

Based on the analysis before, the writer would like to give some suggestions as follows:

1. The learners of English should know about the aspects of existentialism in interpreting the text, especially about novel. Knowing about existentialism and knowing the aspects of existentialism will make the readers easier in understanding the story or narrative of the novel.
2. The students should be able to classify and understand the text in the novel, when they read the novel revealed aspects of existentialism in their writing.
3. The writer also suggests for the next researchers who will conduct the similar theme of study could come with more complete data and discussion about existentialism.

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CURRICULUM VITAE



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She attended the elementary school, SD Inpres Awerange in 1996 and graduated in 2002. In the same year, she continued her study in SMPN 1 Soppeng Riaja and graduated in 2005. She then continued her study in SMAN 1 Soppeng Riaja in 2005 and graduated in 2008.

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